

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 7, 2011**  
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News Release 11-04  
Page 1 of 1

## **Columbia Generating Station Declares Unusual Event**

**RICHLAND, Wash.** – Columbia Generating Station declared an “unusual event” at 4:07 p.m. today in response to the release of a small amount of residual gas that briefly suspended some plant activity.

During work for the plant’s ongoing refueling outage, a small amount of hydrogen gas was released from a pipe and ignited – a less-than-one-second “puff.” The work was being performed in Columbia’s main turbine building, which is a non-nuclear area of the plant. There were no injuries or damage to equipment.

During normal operations, the pipe is filled with water and some hydrogen, which is used to cool the generator. Workers were cutting the pipe, which had been closed and purged, when a small amount of residual, trapped gas escaped the pipe. Out of an abundance of caution, the immediate area was evacuated and an unusual event declared.

An unusual event is a classification describing a condition at a commercial nuclear power plant or its surroundings that could potentially compromise the normal level of plant safety, or that warrants increased awareness by plant staff.

Notification was made to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission shortly after the incident.

Outage work resumed in the area following a thorough safety inspection by Columbia officials.

Columbia powered down April 2 leading up to its biennial refueling outage, which started April 6, and is scheduled to be completed by mid-June.

### ***About Energy Northwest***

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